1877—1911.

MISSION WORK

AT . .

IKWEZI LAMACI,

HARDING, - - -

ALFRED COUNTY,

NATAL. - - -

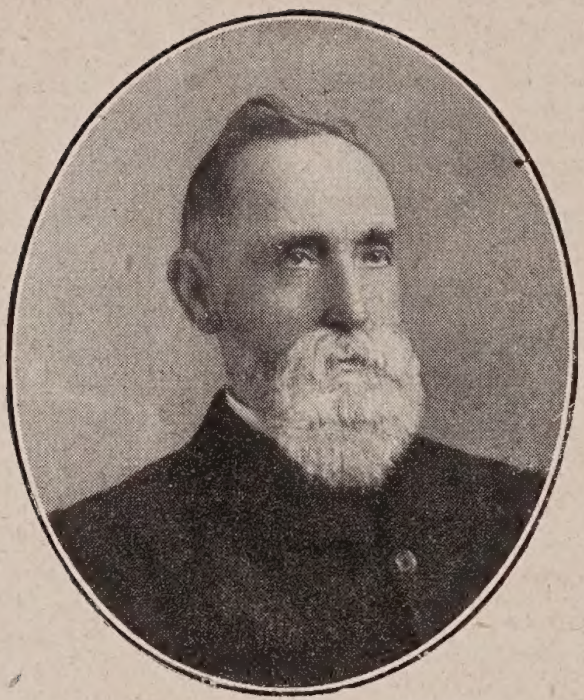
+

By GILBERT GILKES.

PAM.
AFRICA - S.

South Africa - Missions

MISSIONARIES:



Rev. S. AITCHISON.

Mrs. AITCHISON.

Rev. S. G. G. AITCHISON.

1877—1911.

MISSION WORK
AT . .
IKWEZI LAMACI,
HARDING,
ALFRED COUNTY,
NATAL.

By GILBERT GILKES.

JUST OFF TO THE WATTLE PLANTATION.

THE MISSIONARIES' HOME.

I WANT to interest you in a little isolated Mission in the Colony of Natal. It has been carried on for nearly thirty-three years; the work has increased steadily during the whole of the time, and in many respects it is a unique illustration of what may be done by two devoted people (*three* since their son joined them) who have given up their lives to Missionary effort.

In a recent letter Mr. Aitchison says, "We were much cheered and our hearts and hands strengthened, by an unlooked for visit from old friends. They shewed deep interest in all they saw, and the good effects of their visit are still with us. Most people on trips to the Colony only come into contact with towns and large centres of work which are accessible by rail, and in this way they only get a partial and inadequate view of Mission work amongst the heathen in out-lying districts. Several friends on different occasions have had it on their minds to visit us, but the thought of a journey of fifty or sixty miles by Post-cart, with bad

roads and uncertain weather has been too much for them."

Now, I have been to Ikwezi Lamaci more than once and I can say without hesitation that my interest in Missionary work in general, and in this Mission in particular, has been more than doubled by so doing; and I can promise to any one who will go, a warm welcome and a happy and instructive time, and unbounded hospitality.

It is possible that this little book may lead to a visit from some one who can spare the time, I hope it may, but in any case let us imagine that we are actually paying a visit to the Mission Station and to our good friends who have lived there most of their lives, for, knowing the way as I do, and what we shall find there, I propose to take this plan of giving to all who will read this booklet, a fairly complete idea of what has been accomplished.

We will make our start from Pietermaritzburg at the beginning of May, it will be good travelling weather and the roads will be at their best. The train will take us to Richmond and we shall find the Post-cart ready to convey us over hill and dale, through villages and across the Veldt, some forty-five miles to the little town

IKWEZI LAMACI CHURCH AND SCHOOL BUILDING.

IKWEZI SCHOOLROOM.

of Umzimkulu, where we must stop for the night, in reasonably comfortable quarters, and by daylight or before we must set forth on the Harding Post-cart over more hills and across more valleys for some thirty miles.

Mr. Aitchison, or his son, will meet us at Harding, and will probably take the opportunity of shewing us the Griqua school and the buildings, where on Sunday, various services are held for residents in Harding, for the Kaffirs and for the Griquas; he will also take us to see the Mission huts, which are often used when, returning from work in this direction, it is not possible to get home to the Mission Station, which is seven miles further on, as we shall see. Having acquainted us with all things at Harding which appertain to the Mission, he will put two rough little ponies into the Mission "spider," the name given to the light carriages used in the district, and we shall commence our uphill ride to the Mission Station; and as we travel slowly over the very rough road I expect Mr. Aitchison will tell us how he came alone across the same country thirty-three years ago, knowing scarcely anything of the language, and nothing of the Natives, a lonely young man discouraged by the difficulties of the way, but able to cling to the fact that he was there in obedience to

the Divine call that had led him to consecrate his life to the work in which he has been so manifestly blessed. As Mr. Aitchison enlightens us as to the growth of the work, we may feel inclined to say something congratulatory to him, all the response *I* could obtain was the very reverently spoken words, "It is the finger of God." This indicates the spirit in which the work has been carried on; I am able to say, after thirty-two years correspondence and much personal intercourse, that I have never read or heard one single word of self-congratulation. Natural abilities have no doubt been made use of, but, is it not because the life has been absolutely yielded, that the Divine Guidance has been so strikingly manifested?

Before actually arriving at the Mission Station we get a general view from the top of the hill. It is a pleasing prospect; the bareness of the uncultivated Veldt is relieved by the well-wooded Mission compound, and as we drive down the avenue between the tall eucalyptus trees and the abundant growth of wattle trees, we can hardly believe that it is all only one generation old. The house on our left, where we are going to stop for some days, was, most of it, built some ten years ago—it took the place of a smaller one which was falling into

THE SCHOOLMASTER, WIFE AND CHILD.

SCHOOL CHILDREN, PAST AND PRESENT.

decay; but to understand what there was at the beginning you must picture very primitive huts standing unsheltered by the trees and without the pretty garden and the productive fruit trees that tell of the skill and perseverance with which Mrs. Aitchison has managed the ground round the house, and whilst we admire, let us remember that whatever Christianity touches moves in a higher and better direction; was not Our Lord always turning the lower into the higher. Even so our friends have sought to turn the barren land into a fruitful garden, and amongst these people, in a very marked way, the object lesson that such cultivation gives, helps to destroy the hold that superstition has upon the ignorant natives who feared to plant trees, lest evil spirits should hide in their midst.

We must now continue our way through the Mission compound. We find on our left the substantial Schoolroom, which is also used as a Place of Worship, it affords accommodation for one-hundred-and-fifty, for when the seats are all taken the natives sit upon the floor. The workshop and the stables are on the other side of the avenue. Teaching in handicraft forms a good part of the education of the boys, and as we walk on past the schoolroom, we shall realise that under Mrs. Aitchison's

care the training of the girls, in all things that will help them to civilise the home lives of the natives, receives attention. The neat iron-roofed brick building before us is the Girls Home, built by special contributions given in answer to Mrs. Aitchison's appeal.

We must remember that spasmodic effort does not accomplish much amongst such people as those with whom we have to deal. It is the plodding work of years that makes the change. The stedfast and reliable Christian men and women that help the work are now, to a large extent, those who were taken hold of when they were children. No doubt God's grace has reached grown-up people and has led to their conversion, but the great hope for the future lies in teaching the children the truth, before their minds are completely poisoned with error, and that accounts for the fact that so much attention is given to the educational side of the work. So long as the present Missionaries continue the work, there is not the slightest reason to fear that education will usurp the place of that which is the real aim of their lives, but it must have its part, and it is a good thing that Mr. Aitchison has the knowledge and experience that enable him to supervise instruction in woodwork and agriculture, and, further, that his position as a magis-

THREE HEATHEN GIRLS.

TWO HEATHEN NURSES.

trate, and his recognition by the Government on many occasions, gives him a status among the natives that enables him to exercise a wise and helpful authority in connection with the little difficulties that from time to time disturb the peaceful relations of the people to whom, in very truth he stands, " in loco parentis."

Now I must assume that we have made ourselves acquainted with the central Mission Station. We must understand that all that we have seen here is only a comparatively small part of the whole, for in almost every direction there are other centres of activity. Very many miles must be travelled before practical acquaintance can be made with all the outlying branches and schools ; and it would be wearisome to you, if I were to attempt to describe them all ; but if you glance at the appendix you will find that they are mentioned in tabular form, and you will gather some idea of what has been accomplished when you realise that the members and adherents number between 1,500 and 1,600 people, and that there are four fully equipped day schools, and that there are about twenty services held every Sunday, as well as many meetings during the week, and frequent special meetings at Kraals.

How did all this come about. It had a very small

beginning. There was a wave of Missionary zeal in the Young Men's Christian Association in the City of Birmingham thirty-three years ago. The members wihsed for direct representation on the Foreign Mission Field, and they decided to make the experiment; they asked the late Dr. Grattan Guinness if he could find a Missionary who would go out for them, and as a result Mr. Aitchison came down from London, bringing with him a young Native who had become a Christian. Very soon after Mr. Aitchison went out and took over the work that Mr. Clarke had left in obedience to a call to embark on Pioneering work in Central Africa. There was just the beginning of a Mission; the Missionary was alone, and things were rather discouraging; it seemed absolutely needful that the lady to whom Mr. Aitchison was engaged should join him; the Young Men's Foreign Mission Society raised the needful funds, and sent her out. Miss Hall, now Mrs. Aitchison, was just the needed helpmeet, and through storms and sunshine, through sorrow and joy, the work has been carried on without a break, and always progressing. It was not possible for the young men in Birmingham to keep it going by themselves, it soon grew too large for them to manage, and the whole direction was left in the hands

DENTIST (REV. G. AITCHISON) AT WORK.

THE GIRLS' HOME.

of the Missionaries, whilst the Society continued to send very substantial help year by year. The personnel in Young Men's Societies changes rapidly, but it has been a happy circumstance that the local Treasurer, Mr. E. A. Page of Birmingham, has been able through all these long years to maintain an interest in this work.

Some one will very naturally ask, "How is the work maintained now?" Let us consider the Financial Statement, which deals with the year ending June 30th, 1910. We find a total expediture of £700. A little examination of the figures will help us to review the whole position, and to understand in some degree the scope of the work.

We notice that £47 15s. 10d. has been spent in the purchase of land. The Mission Compound at Ikwezi Lamaci is freehold and unencumbered. All the real estate of the Mission is vested in Trustees, whilst all the furniture and ponies and loose stock of every kind are the personal property of the Missionaries. The purchase of 1900 acres of land is proceeding, sixpence per annum per acre has to be paid until a total payment of ten shillings per acre has been completed. Nine hundred acres will very soon be clear, and in a few years time the remaining 1000 acres will also become the freehold

property of the Mission. The acquisition of this land has been, and will continue to be a great advantage to the work. It enables Mr. Aitchison to give the Natives who live upon it a greater fixity of tenure than they could otherwise enjoy. As time goes on some of the land is being brought under cultivation, and Wattle trees, which in the course of some years will become valuable for their bark, have been planted. Land is a very valuable asset in any scheme for the civilisation and advancement of a Native population.

In connection with the land, we must deal with three other figures in the Statement before us: Cultivation, £50 15s. 0d., is incidental to possession of land and the desire to train the Natives, but on the other side the facts that £36 was received for rent, and that farm produce and Wattle Bark brought in £139 18s. 2d., proves that, if viewed even from a commercial standpoint only, the land is a great advantage.

It is not possible from the figures before us to say definitely how much is spent on the Schools, because the item "General Expenditure" includes outlay that might well be debited to Schools. If we take into account the repairs that are included in the item £61, we may safely say that the endeavour to educate the

GRIGUA SCHOOL, HARDING.

EVANGELISTS AND CHRISTIANS.

children does not cost less than £300 out of the total of £700 ; but this teaching is all important, and it has been with much sorrow of heart that, from time to time, applications for new schools have been refused, owing to lack of means. Visiting the schools we shall at once see how well organised and maintained is the work done ; but for those who cannot inspect them for themselves the fact that, upon the report of Government Inspectors, a sum of £177 14s. 3d. was paid as a grant in aid, will speak for itself. Long before the children of the present day are grown up, the Railway, which is in course of construction, will be completed, and will make a great change in the district. European ways and all the host of thlngs, good and evil, that commerce brings in its train will have their effect ; shall we not hasten to make it possible to provide more schools, and try and so teach these little heathen children, so that they may have light, by God's grace, to choose the good and avoid the evil.

This little review of the Flnancial position of the Mission will probably be satisfactory to many who think well of the old adage, " God helps those who help themselves." The item of £35, given by the Native population at the Sunday collections, is a pleasing one,

and it is really gratifying to see that out of the £700 spent, £388 18s. 11d. has been provided apart from the Subscribers. There are some friends of the Mission who send out a very considerable supply of clothing, medicines and sundry other stores; the amount of subscriptions does not, therefore, quite represent all that is sent. The value of goods provided, in addition to subscriptions, generally represents nearly £100 in the course of each year.

If the Work commends itself to you, please support it. It needs fresh Subscribers year by year to make up for those who are called away, and we must remember that new gathering ground can be opened and, we believe, more men and women saved from darkness and degradation and brought into the light and liberty and hope of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. There are no Society or Committee expenses to provide, and no printing to pay for, everything that is given goes solidly to the work. The Missionaries never go home to England on furlough, they will not leave the work, and even the necessary expenses of the short holiday they try to take annually in Durban or elsewhere in the Colony, has for years been borne from a source entirely outside the Mission funds.

WAITING FOR THE DENTIST.

VISITORS AT IKWEZI.

Early in the history of their work, a great sorrow fell upon Mr. and Mrs. Aitchison. Their eldest little boy died, but it is a joy to know that their second, and only surviving child Gershom, grew up to man's estate, and has been working with his parents for some years. Brought up among the Kaffir people, the Rev. S. Gershom G. Aitchison acquired an intimate knowledge of the Native, his life, manner of thought and needs, as well as a complete mastery of the language, and when he felt the Divine call to join his parents in their work, he cheerfully gave up the very satisfactory appointment he held under the Government. His settling at Ikwesi Lamaci was most opportune, and has tended to the good working of the schools and other departments; it has, in fact, made it possible to maintain and extend the work in a manner that would otherwise have been impracticable.

In face of the fact already stated, that there are 1,500 Members and Adherents of the Mission, it is perhaps hardly needful to call attention to the number of Native helpers who are taking part in one way or another in the effort to raise their brethren from the depths of a particularly degraded form of Heathenism, the names of these Natives will be found in the tabular

matter in the appendix. The consensus of opinion in connection with China and other large Fields points to the employment of Native help as the only way to bring the truths of the Gospel before the masses of the people, and it is satisfactory to note how fully this principle has been adopted by the three Missionaries at Ikwezi Lamaci.

Mr. and Mrs. Aitchison have no knowledge as to what I am writing in this little book—they will not see it until it is in print—but I know that they would not like me to say anything that was laudatory in its character, for they desire that God should have all the glory, but I just wish to say that I feel sure that He has endowed them with a large degree of discernment and common sense, and that they have used these gifts for Him with loyalty and fervour of spirit, and in much humility. Let me quote from a recent letter from Ikwezi Lamaci.

"We are sure that those who have united their prayers "and efforts with ours, will be glad to join us in a note "of grateful thanks for the Lord's care and goodness "to us. It is with deep thankfulness that we bear "testimony to His goodness and faithfulness, and to the "prayers and practical sympathy of His people who "have been one with us in heart and hand all these

SOME VISITORS AT THE CHRISTMAS GATHERING, IKWEZI, 1910.

A GROUP OF PREACHERS.

"years. When difficulties and perplexities arise and "seem too much for us, and when we have been at "times 'faint though still pursuing,' God has come in "at the right moment and given us wonderful surprises "as to ways and means; He has often anticipated our "wants and has had the supply ready even before "the need has been apparent to us . . . When one sees "those who were heathen of the most pronounced "type only a short time ago, standing up and confessing "Christ as their Saviour from sin and shame and de-"gradation, one realises something of the practical "results of God's remedy for sin through the operation "of Divine power, as well as by the example of the "Lord Jesus. The outside world knows but little of "these evidences which thrill the heart of workers who "yearn for the salvation of those who are sitting in "darkness and the shadow of death. Fellow-Christian "workers can, perhaps, understand only to a limited "extent the stupendous power of the Gospel in its "operation in these dark places of the earth. Christ "saves the careless ones, and even those who seem to "set themselves in determined opposition against Him; "God sees treasures for His own Kingdom, Jewels for "the Saviour's Crown, that we should never discover "if left to ourselves.

"True faith in Christ overcomes anxiety and despair, "for His promise is sure, 'Lo, I am with you always.' "We have daily assurances of the stedfastness of this "promise."

In considering the Financial needs of the Mission we must remember that, with one or two exceptions, it has not been possible to erect very durable premises for the schools and meeting places, and we not only have to face the need for new buildings, but also large outlay in maintaining them. Another extract from a letter will explain :—

"To speak of material things, there are three buildings "used for Church and School purposes needing attention. "Two have been attacked by white ants, so much so "that how to repair them has become a perplexing "question. A third one has been destroyed by rough "weather; the Workshops at Ikwezi have had to be "re-built, and now we hope that the Industrial work "will be carried on with renewed energy. Most of the "work of re-building has been done with timber planted "and grown at this place and sawn into planks by our "own Natives."

I have tried, as my readers will admit, to keep my story of this work as short as possible in the hope that

PLEASANT VIEW CHURCH (EUROPEAN).

WALLACE MEMORIAL CHURCH.

a good many may read it through, and I would beg those who have read thus far to think whether they cannot manage some day to go and see what God has done through His servants ; if it is impossible, then try and get others who may visit Natal to go to Ikwezi Lamaci. This little book with its numerous illustrations has, perhaps, made you acquainted with a Mission that you had not heard of before. As you turn over the leaves and look at the pictures again, remember that two or three little huts were there thirty-three years ago, and that all that has been done since is the fruit of lives surrendered to the service of God in a lonely and far off land.

Contribute to the expenses of the work if you feel you can suitably do so, and in any case pray that this faithful trio may have all their needs supplied and continue to realise that the good Hand of their God is upon them.

GILBERT GILKES,
Lynnside,
Kendal.

Subscriptions will be received and acknowledged by—

Rev. S. Aitchison, Harding, Natal.
E. A. Page, Y.M.C.A., Birmingham.
G. Gilkes, Lynnside, Kendal.

NATIVE CHURCH, HARDING.

NATIVE CHRISTIANS.

APPENDIX A.

IKWEZI LAMACI (Head Quarters).

Four Evangelists work from this centre, viz. :—

Joseph Sidoyi.
Paulos Mbotwe.
Tom Ngcobo.
Stifane Ngcobo.

Sunday Services :

Morning Service, 9 a.m.
Prayer Meeting, 12 noon.
Sunday School, p.m.
Afternoon Service, 4 p.m.

Prayer Meetings :

Monday, 7 p.m.
Wednesday, 7 p.m.
Friday, 7 p.m.

Enquirer's Class, 3 p.m. on Tuesday.
Women's Meeting, 3 p.m. Thursday (Leader, Mrs. Sidoyi).
Head Teacher at the School, Z. L. Dhlamini.
Sewing Mistress, Mrs. Stifane Ngcobo.

HARDING (SEVEN MILES FROM IKWEZI).

Sunday Services :—

Native Gaol Service, 10 a.m.
Native Service in Church, 3 p.m.
Griqua Service, 10 a.m.
,, ,, 1 p.m.
,, ,, 6 p.m.
Griqua Sunday School, 2 p.m.
European Service, 11 a.m.
,, ,, 7.30 p.m.
European Sunday School, 3 p.m.

Griqua Workers, N. Buikes, T. Bailey, P. Ullbricht.
Head Teacher at Griqua School, Miss V. Millar.
Assistant Teacher at Griqua School, Miss C. M. Bowles.

The Christian Endeavour meets on Wednesday at 7.30 p.m.

The work is helped by European Workers and Sunday School Teachers.

MARCHMONT.

Sunday Services are held.
Enquirer's Class on Wednesday.

Women's Meeting on Thursday (Mrs. Mbotwe, Leader).
Mrs. Mbotwe is the Chief's mother.
Day School (Teacher, Albert Pepu).
Other Workers, Isaiah Caza and Jeremiah.

MHLAHLANE.

Sunday Services are held.
Enquirer's Class during week.
Teacher and Evangelist, E. Madwe.

ELWATENI.

Sunday Services are held.
Enquirer's Class during week.
Prayer Meeting during week.
Day School (Teacher, John Nzoboyi).
Women's Meeting (Leader, Mrs. Gqana).
Other Workers, John Bulu and Jonah Kumalo.

ITHLUKU.

Sunday Services are held.
Prayer Meetings during the week.
Women's Meetings, Thursday (Leader, Mrs. G. Jojo).

KWANOMAHLEZANA.

Sunday Services are held.

CEDARVILLE.

Griqua Services held.
Native Services held.
Sunday School.
Worker, Christian Roux.

NTABAS'.

Sunday Services are held.

MPIKWAS'.

Sunday Services are held.

BEASANT VIEW.

European Services once a Month.
European Sunday School every Sunday.
Native Services once a Month.

UMTAMVUNA.

Sunday Services are held.

Session Meetings of the Evangelists Preachers and Workers from the various Out-Stations are held at Ikwezi Lamaci on the Last Friday of every Month.

APPENDIX B.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE.

IKWEZI LAMACI MISSION,

Year ending June 30th, 1910.

Income.	£	s	d
Balance in hand	0	8	1
Young Men's Society, Birmingham	35	0	0
Government School Grants	177	14	3
Subscriptions and Donations	250	5	9
Sunday Collections, Natives and Griquas	35	6	6
Rents	36	0	0
Farm produce and Wattle bark	139	18	2
Special donation	25	0	0
	£699	12	9

Expenditure.	£	s	d
General Expenditure	301	2	9
Griqua School	153	1	3
Cultivation	50	15	0
Teachers and Evangelists	80	0	0
Land Instalments	47	15	10
Repairs to Schools and Workshop	61	0	0
Insurance	1	13	6
Balance in hand	4	4	5
	£699	12	9

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